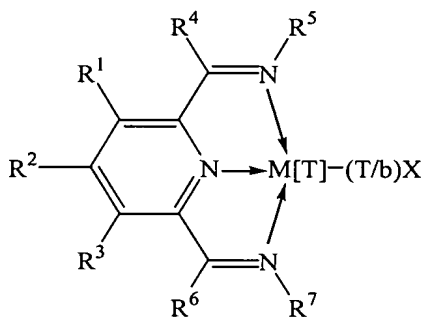


We claim:

1. Process for the preparation of a supported catalyst, comprising the steps of
  - a) contacting a support material containing 1-10 % water with a trialkylaluminium compound; and
  - b) contacting the resulting material with a complex of the formula (I)



Formula (I)

wherein M is Fe[II], Fe[III], Co[I], Co[II], Co[III], Mn[I], Mn[II], Mn[III], Mn[IV], Ru[II], Ru[III] or Ru[IV]; X represents an atom or group covalently or ionically bonded to the transition metal M; T is the oxidation state of the transition metal M and b is the valency of the atom or group X; R<sup>1</sup> to R<sup>7</sup> are each independently selected from hydrogen, halogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl, heterohydrocarbyl, substituted heterohydrocarbyl or SiR'<sub>3</sub> where each R' is independently selected from hydrogen, halogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl, heterohydrocarbyl, substituted heterohydrocarbyl.

2. Process according to claim 1, wherein the support material is silica, alumina, aluminosilicate or crosslinked polystyrene/polyvinylalcohol.
3. Process according to claim 1, wherein the support material is first dehydrated

before being contacted with a known amount of water.

4. Process according to claim 1, wherein the support material is contacted with a solution of trialkylaluminium in an amount sufficient to provide a mole ratio of trialkylaluminium to water of from 3:1 to 1:2, preferably from 1.2:1 to 0.9:1.

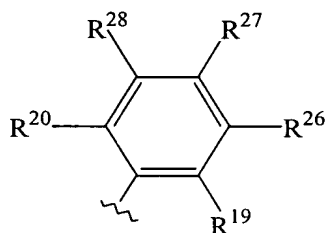
5. Process according to claim 4 wherein the hydrated support is contacted with the trialkylaluminium in the presence of a solvent by adding the trialkylaluminium to the hydrated support.

6. Process according to claim 4 wherein the hydrated support is contacted with the trialkylaluminium in the presence of a solvent which comprises an inert hydrocarbon, preferably isobutane, butane, pentane, hexane, heptane, octane, cyclohexane, methylcyclohexane, toluene or xylene.

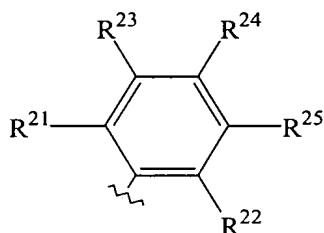
7. Process according to claim 1 wherein the trialkylaluminium compound is trimethylaluminium (TMA), triethylaluminium (TEA), tri-isobutylaluminium (TIBA) or tri-n-octylaluminium.

8. Process according to claim 1 wherein the trialkylaluminium solution and support material mixture is contacted with the transition metal complex of formula (I) in an amount sufficient to provide an aluminium to transition metal ratio of from 1000:1 to 1:1, preferably from 300:1 to 10:1, most preferably from 150:1 to 30:1.

9. Process according to claim 1 wherein in the transition metal complex of formula (I),  $R^5$  is represented by the group "P" and  $R^7$  is represented by the group "Q" as follows:



Group P



Group Q

wherein  $R^{19}$  to  $R^{28}$  are independently selected from hydrogen, halogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl, heterohydrocarbyl or substituted heterohydrocarbyl; when any two or more of  $R^1$  to  $R^4$ ,  $R^6$  and  $R^{19}$  to  $R^{28}$  are hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl,

heterohydrocarbyl or substituted heterohydrocarbyl, said two or more can be linked to form one or more cyclic substituents.

10. Process according to claim 1 wherein the transition metal complex of formula (I) comprises one or more of

- 5 2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,6-diisopropylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,6-diisopropylanil)MnCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,6-diisopropylanil)CoCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2-tert.-butylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,3-dimethylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
10 2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2-methylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,4-dimethylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,6-dimethylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,4,6 trimethyl anil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-diacetylpyridinebis(2,6-dimethyl 4-t-butyl anil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
15 2,6-dialdiminepyridinebis(2,6-dimethylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-dialdiminepyridinebis(2,6-diethylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-dialdiminepyridinebis(2,6-diisopropylanil)FeCl<sub>2</sub>  
2,6-dialdiminepyridinebis(1-naphthyl)FeCl<sub>2</sub> or  
2,6-bis(1,1-diphenylhydrazone)pyridine.FeCl<sub>2</sub>.

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